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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/26/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY: LOOKING TO NAIL DOWN DATE FOR IRAQ
NEIGHBORS-PLUS MINISTERIAL

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1033

[1](#)B. WILSON-SATTERFIELD 3/21/07 E-MAIL

Classified By: CDA Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) Action Request in para five.

[1](#)2. (S) Turkey is moving ahead with planning of the Iraq neighbors plus ministerial to take place in Istanbul based upon reports that Iraqi PM Maliki has agreed on Istanbul as the venue. According to GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Amb. Oguz Celikkol, this information was conveyed both to Turkish Ambassador to Iraq Kanbay by Amb. Khalilzad in Baghdad and to Celikkol directly by GOI spokesman and Maliki advisor Ali Dabbaugh during a March 24/25 meeting between the two in Istanbul. Celikkol indicated the GOT is ready to begin planning for the conference but needs input from the U.S. and Iraq to determine the date. He conveyed the GOT's preference to hold the meeting before Turkey's presidential campaign period officially begins on April 16, but emphasized the Turkish view that it must occur by April 25. Celikkol said the GOT wants to reassure Maliki and the GOI that the purpose of the ministerial is to support Iraq and not in any way dictate on internal Iraqi affairs.

[1](#)3. (S) To assuage GOI concerns, the GOT envisages hosting a preparatory committee meeting two or three days prior to the ministerial during which the text of a statement and other details would be agreed to avoid any surprises at the ministerial. Celikkol said Turkey -- as host -- expects to take the lead in drafting the statement and hopes to have an initial draft to share with the Iraqis and us by the end of the week for comment, after which the Iraqis can distribute to others.

[1](#)4. (S) With regard to a meeting in Istanbul of the "Independent Political Assembly," reportedly proposed to the Turks by Maliki advisor Faruk Abdul Rahman -- at which prominent Sunnis and former Ba'athists would come together with representatives of Shia, Kurdish, and Turcoman groups in a bid to establish conciliatory relationships -- Celikkol reported that the GOT had asked that it be postponed indefinitely and instructed the Turkish embassy in Baghdad not to issue visas to proposed participants. He indicated the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad had asked Rahman for assurances from PM Maliki that he supports the meeting taking place in Istanbul but had not yet received them. The GOT cited the sensitive timing of the proposed meeting and its wish not to create controversy that would jeopardize the neighbors plus conference as the reason.

[1](#)5. (S) ACTION REQUEST: Post requests Department's instruction regarding preferred date for the neighbors plus ministerial and Celikkol's proposed preparatory committee meeting.

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